

4. On certain Errors with reference to George the Fourth's Giraffe. By HENRY SCHERREN, F.Z.S.

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For more than seventy years the duration of life in captivity of the Giraffe presented to George IV. by the Pacha of Egypt has been considerably understated. The error undoubtedly originated in one of the Society's publications, and consequently has been widely copied. The following appears to be the earliest of the erroneous statements, and the source of all the rest:—

“In the year 1827 a female specimen in bad condition arrived at Windsor as a present to H.M. George IV. from the Pacha of Egypt. This individual, after lingering a few months, died, and its mounted skin and skeleton adorn the museum of the Society”\*.

This was repeated in the next List, the last of the series, published in 1844, whence it was copied into D. W. Mitchell's Guide, which appeared in 1852, with this addition:—“The animal died partly from bad management and partly from infirmity of constitution.” In the edition of 1858 the supposed contributory causes are omitted, the statement being:—“It lived, however, only a few months at Windsor.” This was repeated in the first edition of Dr. Sclater's Guide, published in 1859, and onwards in each successive publication down to the fifth edition of the Official Guide. It also occurs in a paper by Mr. Lydekker, F.R.S.†, on “Old Pictures of Giraffes and Zebras,” in which it is stated that “the animal survived but a short time at Windsor,” Dr. Graham's Renshaw‡ being quoted as the authority.

As a matter of fact, the animal lived at Windsor for two years and two months; and the evidence as to the dates of its arrival and death is here set out. At the end of 1826 the Giraffe was sent from Cairo to Malta, where it was kept over the winter. In May 1827 it was shipped in the ‘Penelope’ for London, with two Egyptian cows, in charge of two Arab keepers and an interpreter. These were landed at the Duchy of Lancaster Wharf, Waterloo Bridge, on the evening of Saturday, August 11th, 1827; and on Monday morning Cross took the Giraffe to Windsor in one of Richardson's caravans. The King “hastened to inspect his extraordinary acquisition, and was greatly pleased with the care which had been taken to bring it to his presence in fine order”§. The animal was referred to by the author of ‘The Menageries’|| (i. p. 343) as still living in June 1829; and in an article published in 1833, under the editorial supervision of Owen—if, indeed, it was not written by him,—it was said to “have increased eighteen

\* ‘List of Animals in the Gardens,’ p. 35 (1837).

† P. Z. S. 1904, ii. p. 339.

‡ ‘Natural History Essays’ (p. 105, 1904).

§ ‘Literary Gazette,’ Aug. 25, 1827, p. 554.

|| ‘Library of Entertaining Knowledge.’

inches in less than two years"\*. In 1854 the true date was again indicated :

"The giraffe sent to the French menagerie did well; that presented at the same time to George IV. was the shortest and weakest. [The Consuls of each nation drew lots for the choice.] She was never in good health, and had been roughly treated, and though she had grown eighteen inches up to June 1829, she sank gradually and died in the autumn of that year" †.

By 1879 the correct date was given by Dr. Wilhelm Stricker :

"Ein zweites nach London bestimmtes Exemplar traf im August 1827 anderthalb Jahre alt, daselbst ein, verendete aber schon im Oktober 1829 ebenfalls an Gelenkrankheit wahrscheinlich, weil es in Afrika auf weite Strecken geknebelt auf dem Rücken von Kameelen transportiert worden war" ‡.

Major Fortuné Nott stated that the Giraffe "died in 1829" § ; and while collecting material for my book on the history of the Society I was so fortunate as to meet with evidence that enabled me to fix the exact date of the animal's death.

A paragraph in the 'Times' of Oct. 19, 1829, taken from the 'Windsor Express' of Oct. 17, puts the actual date beyond doubt. It runs thus:—

"Messrs. Gould and Tomkins, of the Zoological Gardens, are now dissecting the giraffe which expired on Sunday last [Oct. 11]. We understand that when the skin is stuffed His Majesty intends making it a present to the Zoological Society."

So that the Giraffe lived exactly two years and two months in this country, having been landed in London on August 11, 1827.

At the meeting of Council held on August 28, 1830, Lord Auckland, President of the Society, submitted "an offer by Sir William Freemantle of the skin and skeleton of the giraffe that lately died at Windsor." It was resolved that the Secretary be requested to inform Sir W. Freemantle that they thankfully accept the same, and will also bear the charges of preserving and setting up the animal. In the second edition (1838) of the 'Catalogue of Mammalia in the Society's Museum,' the animal is entered as being "presented by His Majesty William IV."

Another error with regard to the animal is that it was well known to the people of the metropolis—a popular favourite. The writer of the article in the 'Zoological Magazine,' previously referred to, stated that, owing to the distance from town at which this animal was kept and the state of confinement which its weakly condition rendered indispensable during the latter part of its existence, the living Giraffe was seen in this country by comparatively few individuals.

In the paper by Mr. Lydekker already cited, the author, in describing a painting by R. B. Davis, then in the Royal Collection at Windsor, having on the back the note "Portrait of Giraffe belonging to His Majesty" ||, suggested that the artist took "a.

\* 'Zoological Magazine,' i. p. 3.

† 'English Cyclopædia' (Nat. Hist.), ii. col. 1028.

‡ 'Geschichte der Menagerien,' S. 25.

§ 'Wild Animals Photographed and Described,' p. 225.

|| P. Z. S. 1904, ii. p. 342 (text-figure).

portrait of the Cape Giraffe for his model, and he may have copied Paterson's specimen in the British Museum." It should, I think, be remembered that Richard Bennett Davis was an artist of good reputation. He was afterwards animal-painter to William IV., and the Court Officials of that day must have been aware of his presence for the express purpose of painting the Giraffe, and indeed of his whole history. He owed his education as an artist to royal favour. His father had been huntsman to the royal harriers; George III. took favourable notice of some of the boy's sketches, and placed him under Sir William Beechey. In 1806 he sent to the Academy a painting, "Mares and Foals from the Royal Stud at Windsor." His appointment as animal-painter to the King was made in 1831, and he painted the cavalcade which formed the coronation procession of that monarch\*.

There is, moreover, incontestable evidence that he did paint the Giraffe, and practically all that we know about the habits of the animal in captivity came from his pen. He contributed a very interesting account of the Giraffe to the 'Literary Gazette'†; and in the following passage occurs the first mention of the bilobed teeth known to me:—

"The upper lip is longer than the lower one, which assists the tongue in drawing in the boughs; but when grinding its food it is contracted. It has no teeth or nippers in the upper jaw, and the outside ones are divided to the socket. It is a ruminating animal, and lies down when it chews the cud."

The fact that Davis painted a picture of the Giraffe was stated by the editor of the 'Literary Gazette,' who expressed "our obligation for this paper to Mr. R. B. Davis, who, while painting the picture of the animal for His Majesty, had many opportunities of observing its peculiarities." In 'Menageries' (p. 348) Davis's account of the bilobed teeth is quoted, but this important part of his narrative is omitted from the 'Zoological Magazine' and the 'English Cyclopædia.'

## 5. On the Breeding-Habits of a Cichlid Fish (*Tilapia nilotica*).

By CHARLES L. BOULENGER, B.A., F.Z.S.

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During a short expedition in the spring of last year to Lake Qurun, in the Fayûm province of Egypt, I was able to make some observations on the breeding-habits of *Tilapia nilotica*, the "Bolti sultani" of the native fishermen.

These interesting Cichlids abound in the brackish waters of the lake and are extensively fished for by the natives, the Birket el Qurun supplying most of the markets of Lower Egypt with this excellent food-fish.

Isolated observations have been recorded on the habits of the

\* Dict. Nat. Biogr. xiv. p. 171.

† Dec. 1, 1829.